# THE ARYAN PATH

**Point out the "Way"—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.**
*—The Voice of the Silence*

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## CHRISTIANITY AND INDIAN NATIONALISM

Indian unity exists as the solid bed-rock under the feet of all the sons of India. Creedal differences are walls which cut the surface into a variegated pattern, not objectionable so long as they are not raised too high to see across and to clasp hands across. Christianity in India has had a tendency to raise its walls too high. Too often becoming a Christian has meant progressive alienation from one's people. The common adoption by the Indian Christian of the dress and the ways of living of our foreign rulers is not the cause of that alienation but the surface symptom of a deep-seated *Saheb log* complex.

It is not that many Indian Christians do not feel for their country's plight. Dr. A. J. Appasamy, whose article on "The Contribution of Christianity to Indian Nationalism" we publish below, is not only the writer of several books on India and Christianity but has done rural reconstruction work himself for years. There have been Indian Christians who have been ardent nationalists, like the Kumarappa brothers. But their contribution to the national cause has been made by them as *Indians*, not primarily as members of the Christian community.

We maintain that no religion as such has a contribution to make to Indian nationalism. The unique claims made for Christianity cut off its followers from their fellow-countrymen. The more any of us insist on our separative labels, the less is our contribution to the national symphony. Harmony depends on assonance and rhythm, each group of instruments content with its own part. Fancy the oboist in an orchestra so obsessed with the superiority of his own instrument that he tried to persuade all the other musicians to give up their own instruments and play the oboe!

We do not see the productive vein of the old Epics and Puranas as worked out yet, by any means. But we do not minimise the importance

of having "introduced Christ to India." Or of introducing any of the world's great Teachers to any people. The world stands in great need of living ideals. But proselytism is the bane of mutual understanding. It is not by attempts at proselytism that the living influence of Christ or of any other great Teacher can be spread. Is not Gandhiji, a non-Christian, held by many in the West as well as in the East as one of the greatest exemplars of the Christ-life? Indian Christians can make their best contribution to their Motherland by following his suggestions brought together in *Christian Missions: Their Place in India.* He deplores the Christian Missions' undertaking of social work not for its own sake but as an aid to the salvation of its beneficiaries.

To live the gospel is the most effective way....A rose does not need to preach. It simply spreads its fragrance. ...The history of India would have been written differently if the Christians had come to India to live their lives in our midst and permeate ours with their aroma if there was any....The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance.

# THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIANITY TO INDIAN NATIONALISM

The spirit of nationalism is strong in India today. There is a right kind of nationalism and a wrong kind. The nationalism that instils a pride in India's many intellectual and spiritual achievements in the past and that strives earnestly and sincerely to add to her glory in the future is quite legitimate. People imbued with this type of nationalism are well entitled to ask what Christianity has done for Indian Nationalism in the past, and what it may be expected to do for it in the future.

The story of Christ as it is told in the Gospels is of supreme interest. As His popularity increased and His influence grew, His disciples thought that He would become the political leader of the Jews and enable them to throw off the much-hated Roman yoke. Many suggestions, direct or indirect, were made to Him to this effect. But He did not fulfil their expectations of Him as a political leader. His interest in politics was practically nil. His immediate mission was spiritual and He concentrated on it all His abundant energies. With absolute selflessness, He ministered to the needs of the sick, the suffering, the poor, the destitute, the spiritually hungry and the morally fallen. Mankind has recognised the enormous value of the work which He did. Though this work occupied but a few years and the persons actually helped by Christ were limited in number, the spirit of self-abnegation and ceaseless toil which were shown by Him

have been quite unique. Multitudes of His followers have sought to serve men in the same spirit, though with varying degrees of earnestness and success.

The contribution of Christ to Indian Nationalism has been largely in the sphere of nation-building activities such as Education, Medical Relief and Rural Reconstruction. The followers of Christ in this land have taken a leading part in Education and what nationalist can fail to appreciate the importance of Education in making India worthy of her destiny among the nations of the world? Christians have run elementary schools in cities as well as in remote villages, where many of the conveniences of modern life cannot be had and established centres where teachers for such elementary schools could be trained. At great expense high schools and colleges have been opened and maintained with much success for fitting young men and women for their place in life. Has the education imparted in these institutions been truly nationalistic? Has it sought to give Indian youth a wide and accurate knowledge of the past achievements of their country as well as a thorough familiarity with their own languages, which alone can generate and foster the creative impulse? The answer cannot be a clear affirmative. Christian educationists, like most other educationists in India, have failed to wake up early to the need for making Education in India really nationalistic. All the Christian educational institutions have been receiving Government grants and have fallen in too readily with the Government policy of education, which has held that what is needed for India is not so much a knowledge of her own classics and history as a grounding in English language and literature and an acquaintance with modern science.

In Industrial Education, Christians have done some fine pioneering work. The mechanical skill of many missionaries has been a valuable help. The dignity of manual labour has been taught. I knew the head of a Christian Industrial School, who made some excellent furniture for household, school and church use. He used to entrust definite articles like chairs or tables to individual boys and make them take a personal interest in them. From beginning to end, a chair was the work of one boy who experienced in a measure the creative joy of an artist. The younger boys worked at the simpler articles; the older ones were given the more elaborate pieces. There was no mass production as where all the workers together produce, say, the different parts of tables which are then put together.

In one large and important field of Education, Adult Education, Christians have no important achievements to show. Nor have other Indian educationists for that matter. In a country like India, where the economic level is very low and boys and girls have to begin

earning their livelihood when they are quite young, the importance of Adult Education is very great indeed. Even children who have attended elementary schools for some years soon forget all that they ever learnt. Keeping literates from lapsing into illiteracy is even more important than teaching illiterates to read. In a few months, illiterates may be taught to read but enabling them to keep up their literacy is a lifelong process. Even highly educated people know how the ability to read a foreign language, which has been painfully and laboriously acquired, disappears in a few years unless it is kept up. Adult Education is a vast field demanding all the energies of many national workers in India.

In Education, Christians have rendered one signal service. They have introduced Chirst to India. Through the Christian schools and colleges of India, the knowledge of the Gospels has spread widely. Multitudes of young people have been taught the Bible and have come to know of Christ. The seed sown has in many cases produced no fruit at all, but in a great many others it has yielded fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold and even a hundredfold. There are thousands in India now whose lives have been profoundly influenced by Christ's spirit of service and sacrifice. No lover of India can ignore the tremendous importance of the knowledge of Christ which has been imparted to India with such love and care, what it has already meant to the country and what it is likely to mean, more and more, in the coming years.

Christianity has made a valuable contribution to India in medical relief; scores of Christian hospitals and dispensaries have ministered to the needs of the suffering. I should like to describe here briefly the work at the Tirupattur Ashram in North Arcot District. The Ashram lies in the heart of the country-side about a hundred miles from Madras. It was founded twenty-five years ago by Dr. Jesudasen and Dr. Forrester-Paton. In selecting this site the doctors had in mind the needs of the villager. In the important cities and towns of India there are now excellent hospitals but large rural tracts are still without any sort of medical help along modern scientific lines. The Tirupattur Ashram is therefore placed in a rural area. A large well-equipped hospital is the centre of activity. Attached to the Ashram are also a higher elementary school, two or three night-schools, a rural library, a weaving shed with several handlooms, and a printing-press. No worker in the Ashram gets a salary. The members pool their financial resources, which are considerable, have a common mess where all are provided with simple but nourishing food, which is taken sitting on the floor, in Indian fashion, and are given a supply of *khaddar* clothes. The heavy work in the hospital and the schools is carried on in a spirit of prayer and devotion to Jesus.

Worship is held several times a day in the beautiful Temple on the Ashram grounds. True to the nationalistic spirit of the place, the Temple is built in Indian style. The place of worship is a large *Mantapam* with stately stone pillars, a stone floor and a stone roof; it is not enclosed but is left open for air and light to enter; in South India, where it is warm all through the year, an enclosed building is not at all essential for worship. Facing the *Mantapam* is the shrine with its altar; a wooden door with fine carving on it of Christian symbols closes the shrine when worship is not offered. To give privacy and seclusion to the worshippers, a high wall is built all round the *Mantapam* and the space between the *Mantapam* and the wall is laid out as a small, lovely garden. Over the gateway of the enclosing wall is a simple but impressive *Gopuram*. The purpose of this Temple is to provide opportunities for prayer and meditation to the workers in the Ashram in truly Indian surroundings. Thought, labour and money have been lavished on the Temple to make it worthy of the great purpose for which it is intended. In many ways the Tirupattur Ashram is a unique Christian organisation but it is a symbol and sign of the service which Christianity is likely to render to Indian Nationalism in the coming years.

K. T. Paul, the Christian leader who coined the term "Rural Reconstruction" was General Secretary of all the Young Men's Christian Associations in India for some years and started several centres to help in the building up of a happy and useful rural India. Other Christian organisations have also done some excellent work in this direction. The Katpadi Farm in the North Arcot District is a fine example of the work done in rural areas by Christian leaders. The head of this Farm is Mr. J. J. Devalois, who received his scientific training in an Agricultural College in America. He had also considerable experience as a practical farmer before coming out to India. His Farm contains over two hundred acres; only a small part of it is excellent land with abundant facilities for irrigation, the rest being land of indifferent quality. A higher elementary school is run on the Farm. All the boys receive instruction, both theoretical and practical, in agriculture. They work in the fields every day for about two hours. All kinds of cultivation are carried on: paddy, sugar-cane, vegetables, *ragi*, *cholam* and fruits are raised. Scientific methods of preserving manure and rotating crops are taught. Improved varieties of seeds are sown. Simple agricultural implements, suited to the purse of the Indian peasants, are used. The buildings are inexpensively put up and fit in well with their rural surroundings. The cattle are looked after with love and care and turn out the maximum of work. There is a large poultry-yard with several

foreign breeds. People from neighbouring villages come to see what can be done and carry out in their own fields the methods which impress them most. Actual practical work of this kind with the abundant success it has reached cannot fail to improve the methods of cultivation in that area. The boys from the schools will settle down as village teachers or as peasants and the knowledge of scientific agriculture which they have acquired, though of a very elementary type, will certainly help them and their neighbours to be better village folk.

In the realm of Indian Culture, Christianity has rendered a special service to which reference may be made in closing. Looking through newly published books in Tamil, I am often struck with the lack of the creative impulse. The stories from the old Epics and Puranas, excellent though they are in many ways, have been told and retold so many times that they cease to arouse genuine creative literary activity. The culture of a country needs fresh blood to awaken it to new life. Christianity has brought abundant new themes for our Indian writers and thinkers. In the Marathi language *Christayan* has been described by those who are competent to judge as a work of singular beauty. This book was begun by the distinguished poet N. V. Tilak and was completed by his widow and his son, who had also marked literary gifts. *Rakshanya Yatrikum* is a book of outstanding worth in Tamil. The author, H. A. Krishna Pillay, was a Tamil scholar of rare attainments who long aspired to add to the Tamil language a beautiful Christian classic. For fourteen years he toiled faithfully at this great task. He took the story of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and told it in Tamil verse which is so beautiful that it is likely to be read as long as the Tamil language lives. *Rakshanya Yatrikum* is not a mere translation. While the skeleton of the book was furnished by Bunyan, it was clothed with flesh and blood by a truly creative artist. Krishna Pillay was imbued with Indian Culture of the noblest type. He offered it up to Christ whom he passionately loved and served. All his deep Christian experience was embodied in metre and language which had been carefully developed in the Tamil land through the centuries. *Rakshanya Yatrikum* shows what a fresh stimulus working in the mind of a gifted Indian poet can achieve.

A. J. APPASAMY

# OBSCENITY IN LITERATURE

[**Prof. P. S. Naidu,** Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Allahabad, discusses here a problem of wide application—the deplorable trend to obscenity in more than one present-day literature. If humanity were divided, so to say, vertically, into the pure and the impure, it would be easy enough to dismiss the obscene as written by and appealing to the latter class alone and no concern of the rest. There is a division, but it is a horizontal one—between the higher and the lower nature in every individual. "Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold." To write obscene literature or to read it is to strengthen the lower at the expense of the higher. The lower nature in each is the foe of the higher nature in all, and deliberately to pander to the lower in oneself or in others is to lend aid and comfort to the enemy of Man. Eroticism, as one of Mr. Claude Houghton's characters declared of injustice, "is everyone's business."—ED.]

The August issue of *The Indian P. E. N.* raised, in the article by Mr. Aslam Siddiqi which was accorded the place of honour, the question of obscenity in literature. We may, perhaps, formulate two questions in order to bring out the main point at issue:—

1. Can really great (and good) literature concern itself solely or mainly with the obscenities of life?

2. Can really great (and good) authors take delight in depicting obscenities *ad nauseum?*

I propose to answer these questions from the purely psychological point of view, because contemporary psychology has a great deal to tell us about obscenities of life.

Those who have succumbed to the seductive charms of the bizarre tendencies in contemporary art and literature may excuse themselves by pointing the finger at the objectionable parts of the great Puranas and epics, and of classical drama and poetry. Even the sacred scriptures, it may be contended, are not free from this taint. But let us confront these weaklings with this crucial question: What effect does great literature produce on the mind of the reader? Does it stir up his lower nature into strange restlessness; does it produce an irritating sense of disquietude? No, it does not. Objectionable passages there may be in a great drama, but after reading through the whole play, or after seeing it enacted on the stage, our mind is charmed into quietude. In fact, every sense is soothed and charmed. Good literature allays restlessness, resolves conflicts, and pours balm over the troubled mind. Is it not for this reason that we seek refuge in great literature from the turmoils of this world? Consider, on the other hand, the undesirable effects produced on our mind by one of these short stories or novels with a strong sex element in it. Passion is stirred, mental balance is upset and a strange commotion is produced in

our lower nature. That is condemnation enough, but we shall analyse and uncover the secret springs of obscene literature in the mind of the author and expose them in all their ugliness.

That literature can be good or great without being decent is a creed which is symptomatic of a deep-seated malady of our times. An artificial separation has been made between intellect and feeling, and a false belief has been propagated that a man may attain intellectual eminence while his feelings are in a disordered condition. It is true that we can cite names by the score of persons who were moral wrecks but outstanding successes in their professions. But such men have diseased personalities. The lack of harmony and balance between two parts of our own nature is a thing to be condemned, and not applauded. It is this lack of harmony that is the root cause of all the ills that man is heir to at the present day. Einstein himself has remarked, "The present troubles of the world are due to science having advanced faster than morality; when morality catches up with science, these troubles would end." And science, let us remind ourselves, is the product solely of our intellect.

Really great literature must be intellectually great, and must also be morally great and decent. Now great art is the creation of a great mind. Let us analyse the process by which such art is created. Contemporary psychology teaches us that nature has endowed man with a set of primitive (or primal) instincts and emotions (variously called dispositions or propensities, wants, needs or fundamental drives). These are the raw material of human nature. Man kneads this plastic clay of his own nature, and moulds out of it beautiful and fragile sentiments such as friendship, affection, gratitude, awe and reverence, and equally fragile but ugly sentiments such as hatred, jealousy, scorn and contempt. As he grows more and more mature, man develops the sentiments of love, loyalty, patriotism and so forth. But often these sentiments come into conflict. The conflict has to be resolved, and the sentiments arranged in an ascending scale of values. And on goes man building more and more sentiments, facing their conflicts and arranging them in a scale of sentiment values with a master sentiment at the top. Thus is man's character moulded from crude instincts and emotions into the highest ideals which move him to noble actions.

Now there is one important aspect of these instincts and sentiments which is of special significance to us. Instincts and sentiments must *express* themselves. The nature of our mental structure is such that it must find an outlet in some suitable channel. For the ordinary man who forms only ordinary sentiments, the ordinary channels of expression are enough. His daily conduct—his intercourse with friends, relatives

and business associates—is adequate expression for the sentiments and scales of sentiment values generated by his mind. But not so is the case with the great man or the genius. His mind, under the stress of a great inspiration, is filled with an exalted sentiment, unique and inexpressible. Some divine sentiment is struggling to be born. And the ordinary channels of expression are utterly inadequate for this thrilling inspiration. It is then that the gifted artist creates a great work of art. It is then that a Tyagaraja pours out his soul in divine melody; it is then that a Kalidasa creates a *Śākuntalam ;* it is then that the Ajantan artists create a Padmapani or a Vajrapani. Great art is born under the stress of a great sentiment. The art and the sentiment are great, and at the same time morally good.

The emotions which form the fundamental constituents of our mind and the sentiments which are formed out of these emotions have another peculiarity. They have the capacity to reproduce themselves in the minds of Sahradayas ( those who can respond sympathetically ) through a process known in psychology as sympathetic induction. Even in the case of ordinary men and women sympathetic induction is effective. One is afraid not only when one directly perceives a dangerous or injurious object, but also when one hears the cry of terror uttered by another person. Fear is induced sympathetically by the perception of the *expression* of fear in another member of the same species. It is so with every ordinary sentiment and emotion which is stimulated by the perception of its own object, and also by the perception of the expression of that emotion or sentiment in another person. This elementary principle operates in the æsthetic realm too.

Great art, then, is the creation of a great and good mind. It is the outward expression of a noble sentiment generated in the mind of a great artist. Such art has also the capacity of inducing sympathetically the same noble sentiment in the mind of the onlooker or enjoyer. And there is something more wonderful about great creative art. When a Sahradaya has been caught up in its charms, his mind goes through the same stages as the mind of the creative artist, that is, the Sahradaya recreates the work of art afresh every time he enjoys it. In this act of creativity lies the secret of the joy which suffuses the mind of one who contemplates great art. Great art is æsthetically great, and morally good, both in its origins and in its effects.

How fares it with these ultra-modern works of art which revel in indecency ? What is the nature of the mental structure which has created a drama, a novel, a short story, a statue or a picture steeped in indecency while managing to maintain the æsthetic demands of outward form ? The mind which creates such forms and the mind

which enjoys them are both filled with bizarre complexes, phobias and repressions, ugly and unsocial in essence. And the most distressing thing about these mental states is that they are *unconscious*. The author does not know that they are lurking in the depths of his own mind. They are, moreover, never quiet, but are constantly seeking a channel of expression for themselves. These complexes make of the artist an unwitting slave, and escape into the world through his pen, brush or chisel. *Indecent literature is the unwitting expression of indecent complexes lurking in the unconscious mind of the artist ; and when such literature appeals to other minds, these minds too, we may be certain, have hidden inside them similar complexes of an unsocial nature.* Indecent literature serves both to the mind which creates it and to the mind which enjoys it as a channel of escape for the ugly complexes hidden in their unconscious depths. When the creation and enjoyment of such literature becomes wide-spread, then they are the unmistakable symptoms of a decadent age.

A really great author can never take delight in the indecencies of life. His mind has been lifted up to the exalted level where it will be psychologically impossible for him even to think of indecencies ; and it goes without saying that great literature, which is the creation of such a mind, can never occupy itself with obscenities.

P. S. NAIDU

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# MASTER JOHN HUSS

The Czechoslovak Society of Bombay have published a booklet, *In Commemoration of Master John Huss (1369-1415), Czech Reformer and Martyr*. It includes a brief account of the life of the Czech religious reformer Huss, a notable counterpart of the English Wycliffe, the pathetic story of his going to the stake for the truth he professed, and the text of the sermon preached by the Rev. J. F. W. Ruddell on 4th July 1943, the anniversary of his martyrdom. It also includes short sketches and utterances of Czech savants like the seventeenth-century scholar and educationist, John Amos Comenius, the nineteenth-century leader, Frantisek Palacky, the great creative artist of the nineteenth-century Bedrich Smetana, and, above all, the great modern makers of the Czech renaissance, T. G. Masaryk and Dr. Edward Benes. The story of the Czechoslovak struggle through the centuries to preserve cultural and national integrity is a heroic story, not without lessons for all who would be masters in their own house. Frantisek urged his people to " be true to themselves, true to truth and true to justice " and Masaryk testified that

> a man and a people religiously convinced, a nation steadfastly determined to realize its ideals, will always reach their goal. This I have learned from life ; this too is the teaching of our own history and that of all nations.

# INDIA'S PROBLEM OF PROBLEMS
## THE FIXED ATTITUDE

[ We agree with **Shri Madan Gopal** of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, that a too conservative regard for custom and tradition impedes social progress. But can we say that the reformers have failed ? It is easy to underrate the work of pioneers but is it not due to the efforts of the reformers he names and of many others that progress has at least seemed to many desirable and worth achieving, however hard to bring about ? They have declared unchallengeable values and can we justly charge with ineffectiveness the prescription that we have refused to try ?

And the statement that " progress of religion and of the social or political order cannot go hand in hand " cannot be accepted without qualifications. It all depends upon how we define religion. If " religion " is taken to mean mere outward form without principle or understanding, if it means sectarianism and superstition and all their train of evils, then yes, but not otherwise. Would it not be more accurate to say that progressive moves in our own days have proved largely ineffective because they are not conceived in the true religious sense ? If by religion is understood not this religion or that, but Religion itself, which binds all men, all beings in one universal brotherhood, it should furnish the strongest dynamic for reform.

We do not share the hopes Shri Madan Gopal pins upon the industrialisation of India. It might indeed, if it came, " shatter the existing social fabric," but it would shatter too how much besides that India could ill afford to lose ! The remedy would be far worse than the disease. The proof ? Society in the highly industrialised countries of the West !—ED. ]

The real problem of India is, at its root, the problem of our fixed attitude towards life and its problems. Broadly speaking, the human mind is instinctively conservative, swayed more by sentiment than by reason. In an attempt to reason out things and to base one's actions on the conclusions one is called upon to make an effort. On the other hand, the force of habit and custom is much more powerful ; one yields to it without any conscious effort.

On this fundamental psychological truth about the engineering of human nature are based all patterns of social life ; it has led to the evolution of custom law, whose repositories, in due course of time, became the religious institutions and women.

But nowhere is this pattern of life so rigid, nowhere are age-old and meaningless traditions and conventions so deeply ingrained, nowhere is the life of the masses so minutely regulated and, also, nowhere is the freedom of mind so unlimited as in India. So firm has been the hold

of traditions and conventions on our minds that to uproot them is a hopeless task.

The provinces of theory and practice are entirely separate. There is no clear line of demarcation. Nevertheless, there is seldom any overlapping.

Indian society gives to its members the completest liberty of mind. You may be an intellectual giant or a mental pervert. Mentally, you may belong to any party of any complexion. You may easily be a socialist or a Fascist; a liberal or a conservative; a radical or a sentimentalist; a revolutionary or a reactionary; a believer or an agnostic or even an atheist; irreligious or unreligious, social or unsocial. Society will leave you in peace. Your intellectual development will be allowed to proceed unhampered in an atmosphere divorced from all realities.

When, however, you try to put your ideas into action, things will be entirely different. You will find arrayed against you an almost invincible foe, powerful through mere inertia, ready to put down with an iron hand all attempts to undermine its influence and authority. Outside the Ivory Tower, it holds a monopoly and it will never brook even the slightest deviation on the plane of reality, the field of actions. Here everything is decided in advance; grooves are already laid down. You are not expected to strike a new line. The fixed scale of values, the fixed way of life set down by "our great infallible forefathers" must be accepted without question or protest. Faith in their infallibility, and not reason, is expected to be our sole guide through the labyrinth of life. Otherwise you run the risk of being branded as an enemy of the social order; of being an outcaste, or, if you are powerful enough to silence the custodians of custom, of being faced with an invisible social boycott. If you have a daughter nobody would dare accept her hand. It would be like living in water and courting the hostility of the crocodile.

And so impregnable has this fortress of the social order become that wave after wave of disintegrating forces, external as well as internal, like the successive threats to the British Isles, have all failed. That tremendous impact, Alexander's invasion, failed to bring about even the slightest reorientation. Buddha's advent had excited new hopes, new trains of thought and new movements but they all disappeared from the Indian horizon as suddenly as they had made their appearance. The old forces, subdued for a short span of time, reasserted themselves at the first opportunity. Likewise, the greatest and most powerful personalities on the Indian stage have failed to change the social pattern. Asoka, Akbar, Sher Shah Suri, Shivaji and the Peshwas, Zain-ul-Abdin and the Vijayanagar kings tried to base their policies on the bed-rock of a homogeneous nation. They all failed.

Nanak, Kabir, Chandidass, Tukaram, Gnyaneshwar and Ram Mohan Roy rose in revolt against the tyrannies of society and its obnoxious customs; they all wanted to reform society according to their own notions. But so hard proved this cake of custom, baked for centuries as it had been, so powerful the force of sentiment, that they all strove in vain. Except for temporarily arousing the people from their hypnotic trance, all these personalities and movements proved ineffective against the inviolability of custom and tradition. Like projectiles thrown into still waters, they started waves which ceased with the disappearance of the source of the disturbance.

Swami Dayananda and Mahatma Gandhi are too near our times to be placed in the proper perspective. But the fate of their institutions is not likely to be very different. Untouchability is an instance. It still remains a stigma on the Hindus. In spite of all the propaganda by the Arya Samaj, the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi, how many of us today mix with the untouchables on a basis of social equality, without the least pang of conscience?

On the one hand, the higher classes have the fixed attitude of viewing the problem calmly, reasoning out things subtly, but acting "as the forefathers acted." The high-class Hindu takes ærated waters and ice-creams which are manufactured by labour, among which are Harijans; he dines with non-Hindus at the same table and is served by non-Hindus, but he cannot drink water "contaminated by the Harijan's hands." He cannot even entertain the idea of acting in another way. The Brahmin can, indeed does, share the same berth in the railway train with the untouchable; but he cannot sit on the latter's charpoy. The small-scale shoe manufacturer is to be looked down upon with contempt, but the large-scale Brahmin or Bania shoe-manufacturer is to be respected and honoured.

This engine of oppression has resulted in an inferiority complex in the untouchable. He too has a fixed scale of values. He cannot imagine his lot to be better in any way. Invite him to dine at the same table with you. He would ask himself if he could believe his ears, or if you were in your senses. In all probability, he would refuse your invitation.

There are a host of other customs like the ban on inter-caste marriage, inter-communal dining and widow remarriage, or the preference for marriage at an early age and the pernicious dowry system. (They may not be very common in big cities; but we cannot neglect the eighty per cent. of the population of India that lives in villages.) Few are the thinking people who do not condemn these out-of-date and pernicious customs in theory; but fewer still are they who abjure them in practice; they stagger at the very idea.

Recently an up-country friend created quite a stir by refusing to

go through that sham drill which passes muster on the occasion of marriage—putting on the sham crown, riding a horse and sauntering about like a warrior-king, all a replica of mediæval times, absolute nonsense today. My friend, as a result, was assailed from all sides, even by those who saw reason in his objection. Indeed, those who declare from the house-tops that they advocate liberal and progressive ideas are the most conservative.

Again, every well-read and thinking man believes in the essential unity of all religions ; yet on occasions which require a detached outlook, he behaves like a thoroughgoing fanatic. Then there are those who have no belief in any form of religion. But that does not matter. For their Faith comes with their birth. Mr. A. and Mr. B. are born a Hindu and a Muslim respectively. They are liberal in outlook and sincerely believe that they are as good Hindus as Muslims, or *vice versa*, or, for that matter, Christians ; let us presume they hate all blue prints and believe in human values. Yet, they cannot escape, for unless and until they embrace another Faith, which frustrates their object, they remain what birth has made them. Society presumes that none can be without a religion.

The iron dictatorship of parenthood is another instance. Right from the cradle, the child is taught to respect age and experience and to give unquestioned obedience to parental authority. The child grows into a slave to the caprices of his elders. The parents plan his career and decide his marriage to suit their own needs and in gross neglect of his own. His future is regarded as not his own but that of the family and the community. In matters that concern him vitally not the least say is permitted to him.

Rationalism and a scientific outlook are shunned. Implicit faith in Fate and absolute resignation to God's will are extolled. Contentment with the lot one is placed in is held to be the ideal. The acceptance of the existing order without the slightest protest is recommended. Repression of the true self and not its expression, we are told, is the law. Obedience, to adapt Lord Acton's famous adage, weakens ; absolute obedience weakens absolutely. All latent originality and initiative are stifled.

The result of all this is that we are a thoroughly melancholic race—you may euphemistically call it mystic. Our sense of humour, if we have any, is very weak. Life is looked upon as an unwelcome burden, never as a privilege. Our highest-class literature, plays and cinemas harp upon the same pessimistic attitude towards life. The most popular tunes are pregnant with such ideas as : "The world is an illusion" ; "Man is like a bubble on the surface of the sea" ; "The world is a caravanserai and we are the pilgrims" ; "Life is but an

empty dream"; "Shun sagacity and follow God."

Gray, Omar Khayyam and Schopenhauer, whose mental constitution was similar to ours, find favour with us. The result is a sapping of the source of life. Further, we draw inspiration from the past, which was undoubtedly glorious, but in this attempt to cling to the past, we cut ourselves adrift from the stream of progress.

To bring about regeneration on the social plane, which largely determines the economic and political complexion, it is imperative that we undermine the influence of religion, for the progress of religion and of the social or political order cannot go hand in hand. The acceleration of one involves the retardation of the other. Each of them must undermine and sap the other.

Deeper reflection leads one to the conclusion that women are by far the greatest stabilising influence in India's social life. With the support of the priestly classes, they have become the virtual custodians of custom and tradition.

Woman's sole guide is faith. The life of feeling and of sentiment predominates in her. She cannot be brought to reason. Not that it is difficult to convince a woman; it is too easy. But she will flatly refuse to put "new ideas" into practice. And she will not stop at that. She is too conscious of public opinion. She would not allow you, if it lay in her power, to walk in any but the furrowed grooves. She insists on doing exactly what others do and does so simply because she does so. Behind her she has the sanction of the age-old customs instituted by our ancestors "who were not fools."

A glaring instance of the power of women can be seen in the existence of parasitic Sadhus, Fakirs, and beggars who exist not because of the rich philanthropists but because of the patronage extended to them by women. And this will disappear the day the invisible pact between women and the priestly caste denies them mercy. Indeed, the whole pattern of India's social life will undergo a transformation on the day that women decide upon it. How and when it shall come depends upon factors which are still in the womb of Time.

There is, however, a silver lining to the cloud. The one hope of India's salvation lies in her industrialisation, which, if history is any reliable guide, will bring about some vital changes, for it is incompatible with any social order based on a different system of production, as is India's. The history of Europe shows that it can be left to the machine to shatter the existing social fabric.

MADAN GOPAL

# SOME THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL RELIGION

[ **Shri Shiv Kumar Shastri, M. A., M. SC.** ( London ), Barrister-at-Law, writer and advocate at the High Court, Lucknow, has a background of Indian as well as European universities and the Graduate School of International Studies at Geneva. He represented India at the World's Youth Congress at Geneva in 1936. In this thoughtful essay he brings out that religion in essence is one. The differences that divide are in the non-essentials. The " subjective identification with the supreme University " of which he writes is the obverse of the realisation of Universal Brotherhood. It is the core of religion. Ethics is its application in practice and does not differ between creed and creed.—ED. ]

The idea of a Universal Religion implies the existence of a code of moral and spiritual conduct that remains unchanged and inherently valid for all time. It does not suggest the supersession of existing religions. Much rather, it requires a better understanding of their nature. It demands of us the ability to rise above the fetters of environmental and historical limitations, within which the conventions of different religions arose and took shape, and to try and understand what is permanent and what is circumstantial. What is permanent in this context is necessarily the supreme, *unattached* and universal Truth. What is circumstantial is inevitably the sectional interest, that seeks social recognition, camouflaged as religious truth. Our religions attempt to guide us in raising our moral stature. They do not expect us to feed our vanities and desires whilst uttering the name of God.

In order to understand the processes that will enable us to distinguish between the universal and the circumstantial we must start with a set of fundamental assumptions, namely, that religion as commonly understood means two things: (1) It deals with the metaphysical and moral problems of man in isolation and in society. It attempts, on the one hand, to know the Unknown, to attain, that is, subjective identification with the supreme Universality, the realisation of which expresses itself in the objective conduct of an individual as a citizen of the world. On the other hand it seeks to give the life of man a moral connotation. So the object of religion in this sense is (*a*) to give spiritual satisfaction to the soul and (*b*) to base the conduct of men and women upon the ethics of virtue, honour and justice. (2) Religion also means the various forms of ritual, forms of belief, forms of worship, personal law, canon law, etc., which each geographical area has devised for itself in relation to its objective and social conditions.

The final end of all these institutional factors is undoubtedly to give effect to the idea of a moral life that lies behind them. But consistently with the lethargy and sluggishness of men's minds these institutional devices solidify into effete traditions that flourish more because of the vested interests they support than because they are still reflecting morality or the ethical purity of a just life.

Quite clearly it is only in the first sense that religion is identical with eternal and universal Truth, and is *of necessity* the same everywhere. If we look at our Upanishads or at the classical tradition left by Socrates and the philosophers of ancient Greece, or at only the philosophic portions of the Quran and the Bible, we find an identity of sentiments that need befog and surprise only the ignorant. We will find an enunciation of the same Truth in Gautama Buddha and other philosophers and religious reformers that have appeared from time to time.

On the other hand, if we look at what I may be permitted to call the "Story Section" of our religions, like the Puranas, or the relevant sections in the Bible or the Quran, or at the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome and elsewhere, we find a difference in approach, terminology, content and expression. The reason is clear. It is the differences in the objective factors of environment that condition the variations in names, incidents, scenes and ideals. An undercurrent of unity there is, even here, but that is not important for the moment.

Whenever religious conflicts arise it is in the latter sense that they take shape, and even so they are determined by motives other than religious, at any rate among those who inspire and lead such struggles. They who understand religion in the former sense are incapable of waging war against each other. For they have seen TRUTH without the intervention of myths, and if they use myths, it is for the purpose originally intended, namely, to give the implications of Truth by means of traditions, stories and examples in order to promote good conduct and a life of virtue and idealism.

If what is stated above is correct a number of propositions follow. I can state them best in the form of a few aphorisms : (*a*) What is good for man as man is good for men in general ; (*b*) Laws of morality in essence cannot vary under any circumstances ; and (*c*) Eternal Truth is identical with the Universe and the Self. These three aphorisms we shall say are good for all time. What is not true for all time is the way different religions seek to give effect to them. Social relations and economic conditions change, requiring new methods for pursuing the same ends. So long as men lived in isolation from each other, the differences in their social conditions led to differences in their mental background. With the advance in the knowledge of the peoples of the

world, this background had of necessity to enlarge, till now we are so closely knit—the world, I mean—culturally, economically and politically, that attachment to the myths of old is an anachronism and a bundle of delusions in a world of concrete universality.

Does it mean that time is now ripe for a new Prophet who will create new myths and speak in fresh parables ? I do not think so. Does it mean that the organised body of traditions of one or another existing religion will have to be universalised ? I think not. Such a solution, to use a rather hackneyed legal phrase, is " time-barred." We do not want the notions, laws and customs of one set of people to be bodily good for another. What we want is an apprehension of Eternal Truth. We want the people of the world or, at any rate, those who will be leaders and statesmen, to see the Truth as world citizens, and not to accept a parochial and garbled version of it as members of this or that country, community or race.

We should like the men of reason to apprehend the Universals with which every religion is instinct. We want people to be moral, truthful and just without saying that they are so because of this or that religion. Those who are devout may believe in God with as fervent an intensity as possible without thrusting the form of their belief on others. If we want a new prophet at all we want one who will not start a new religion but who will succeed in separating the dross from the gold among existing religions and in making the distinction clear to the world. That will constitute the nucleus of a world religion.

How shall we set about it ? I suggest that we shall attain our object best by investing religion with the meaning it had originally and was meant to have, namely, by considering it as dealing with the relation of man to God, which includes such topics as Death, Immortality, Freedom of the Will, etc. We shall use the word " morality " to indicate the universals of conduct that highly developed minds everywhere consider as appropriate for the welfare of society and of man in society. Let us use the appellation " Categories of Universal Morality " to indicate this aspect of the problem.

At this point those who have followed the above argument carefully will realise the truth like a flash : *the truth that religion in this sense is an absolutely personal and private phenomenon, and that it is beyond the competence of reason to analyse its nature.* Religion is a function of intuition and feeling. It cannot be described in language and therefore cannot be discussed.

Call this feeling or intuition " Faith " if you will, but it is essential to grasp thoroughly the sphere within which it operates. It is purely an individual phenomenon. It is not likely to repeat itself, since no two individuals can think and feel identically with respect to a particular set of stimuli, especially

if they wish to articulate that feeling into language, for immediately their description will be coloured by the form of their worldly experience. "Revelation" will for ever remain a secret with those who have had it.

On the other hand the Categories of Universal Morality deal with the problems of man in society. They are therefore open to discussion and reason is competent to deal with them. Reason can *prove* that they are right. Wherever man talks and discusses with man, reason with its cold and impartial objectivity forms the most reliable vehicle. Discussion on any other terms is bound to be futile.

In order that the above argument may be properly understood I will propound three axioms or laws :—

(*a*) Man has two worlds in which to live, the world of *thought* and the world of *conduct*.

(*b*) The world of thought has two parts: One that moves within the realm of speculative reason and the other, palpably beyond reason, which is inspired by intuition, feeling, emotion or mysticism and the governing quality of which is *faith*.

(*c*) The world of conduct also has two parts: One that impinges on, and is affected by, the conduct of another, and the other which affects only the doer and does not depend on the conduct of another.

The first axiom is a truism but one that is frequently ignored rather than understood. The second and third deal respectively with the content of metaphysics and political philosophy. But it will be seen that the underlying distinction made in both is based upon identical reasons and leads to similar consequences. Thus in axiom (*b*) there is, firstly, the field wherein reason functions. The portion of "thoughts" dealt with in this case is that which is conditioned and aroused by the world of "experience." Secondly, there is also that realm of thought wherein reason is not competent. It represents the eternal attempt of man to know the Unknown, unknown in the sense that the five experiential senses are not capable of perceiving or understanding its nature, and reason is palpably a creature of experience. As to whether this part of the thought-process is intuition, faith or delusion it is not for us to generalise. We can safely leave it to the individual concerned to deduce his own conclusions. We should understand only that Faith in this sense is most sacredly a private affair and is not a subject for discussion.

In axiom (*b*) we speak of "Faith" and "Reason." In axiom (*c*) we might substitute the words: "Private Conduct" and "Public Conduct." We will then see that the distinction is simple and the nature of the relationship clear. Political Theory has made us familiar with the notion that society can compel an individual to desist from antisocial conduct. That is to say, the basis of political obligation permits an individual freedom of action subject to like freedom in his fellow-men. The

determination of questions like "hindrances to political freedom" or the degree of coercion to be exercised by the state, is clearly the field where reason is supremely in action.

On the other hand, political theory grants an individual the right to act as he pleases in cases where his behaviour is absolutely private and does not prejudice the welfare of society. Such conduct may be a result of the exercise of reason, or it may be due to motives which reason may not be capable of explaining. Whatever may be the remote or proximate cause of an individual's personal idiosyncrasies, his freedom of action will remain unimpaired. Society will be satisfied if in the externals of behaviour he conforms to the norms deemed essential for its preservation.

This in my judgement is the vital distinction that enables us to view religion in its proper perspective. It shows us that in modern society politics is essentially a secular phenomenon. If religion intrudes in this sphere it does so at the cost of ceasing to be a body of rules for the spiritual guidance of men. Tragically it becomes a tool in the hands of political quacks and charlatans. Undoubtedly political institutions in the long run have to be based on the universal notions of morality, but we make a fatal mistake in regarding morality as identical with the ritualistic phenomena in a religion. This is our great delusion. The sooner we get rid of it the better.

SHIV KUMAR SHASTRI

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# RESPONSIBILITIES BUT NO RIGHTS

The idea of hegemony is strongly entrenched. O. M. Green, writing in *The Fortnightly* for July on "China's Future Place in the World" proposes China to the Asiatic *gadi*. He writes that

> China's culture, her native wealth and industriousness and the mental purification she has undergone in war all combine to mark her out for leadership in Asia, where the cry "Asia for the Asiatics" is none the less real because in Japan's mouth it means Asia for the Japanese.

India knows her old friend China too well to be alarmed. Chinese papers may, as Mr. Green observes, be "taking a keen interest in the future of Malaya, Indonesia and India" but that does not imply a mounting will to power. General Chiang, Mr. Green concedes, told the People's Political Council in the autumn of 1942 that "China does not want the leadership of the Asiatic peoples, to whom she gives sympathy and help." The Foreign Minister, Mr. T. V. Soong, amplified this at a Press conference three days later, repudiating all idea of domination. "Regarding other subject nations we have responsibilities but no rights."

There cannot be a just and lasting peace without a family of nations in the true sense. And in such a family no great powers will be called upon to assume parental responsibility. Justice and Freedom will discharge that rôle. Obeying their behests, the nations, small and great, can dwell in harmony and mutual helpfulness.

# NEW BOOKS AND OLD

## THE MODERN DEMOCRATIC STATE*

At a time when the word "democratic" is being used, rather misleadingly, as the general label for the politics of the United Nations, this sound and authoritative handbook is useful. The Master of Balliol has produced a very clear and precise account of the development of democratic politics, paying equal attention to the historic growth of Western society and the theories which developed with, and reacted upon it. In a second volume, Professor Lindsay proposes to undertake the more speculative task of assessing the prospects of democracy. For, as he clearly sees, the technical and other developments of modern society not only increase the burdens laid upon the State, but change their nature. The State of the present and still more of the future, armed with altogether unprecedented powers over the minds and bodies of the citizens, will no longer be able to conceive its function as the passive one of co-ordinating the different sectional demands of the community and executing its "general will"—which has been the essential idea of democracy. It will be compelled, he thinks, to try to create, or call forth, initiative and co-operation which would not otherwise appear. It will have to try to "make the community more truly a community." To do that, and remain "democratic" is rather a paradoxical proposition.

The notion of democracy as the essential principle of good government originated in a very few states of the West—in England and France especially—and the notion itself is simple, for all it really implies is that the best kind of government is government by free mutual consent. That can never have been quite new in idea. In practice also a good deal of government in Europe, as elsewhere, was certainly carried on "democratically" long before the word was used; but the mere fact of decisions, laws and ordinances being arrived at by discussion and open agreement had not previously been elevated into the supreme criterion of right and just government. In democracy it is; that is the difference; and this criterion was established in Western Europe about the same time as it was signalised by the cutting-off of the head of King Charles I of England, with all legal ceremony.

In a State of any size, the organization of things so that we can be sure they are all according to free democratic discussion and agreement, presents technical problems. Professor Lindsay tells the story well, especially the story of how successive political thinkers tried to embody the democratic idea in constitutional forms and methods, with more or less success.

He does not show, however—though he seems to assume—that the apotheosis of democracy is politically valid. He may think, as many do, that the last three hundred years of Western history are of such brilliance that they

* *The Modern Democratic State*, Vol. I. By A. D. LINDSAY. (Humphrey Milford, The Oxford University Press, London. 12*s*. 6*d*.)

answer the question in the affirmative; but that is an empirical and doubtful proof. What he does show is that the rise of the democratic idea to supremacy was inevitable, as it was the only common ground available after the disintegration of the mediæval system with its theocratic basis. European society was still highly organized in a number of different functional orders, none of which, however, was capable of supplying an all-inclusive conception of the State. This was supplied, as Professor Lindsay explains, by the new religious sects. In the new Puritan communities the procedure by which they managed their own affairs was perfectly democratic, because they were united by common doctrines and small enough to arrive at unanimity by personal discussion. Hence they conceived of themselves, not unnaturally, as being both the example and purpose of politics in the wider sense. They thought that the highest function of the State was to confirm, defend and do justice between such forms of association as theirs. Law, which was the whole duty of the State, was necessary to make possible the works of grace. The State's business was not to define what was right, but to defend the rights of the individual and the group. The State, as such, was not supposed to know what was right.

This conception of the legislative State as a sort of chairman, enabling the constituencies and members of society to arrange their affairs by orderly discussion and procedure, has worked tolerably well, partly because the societies of the West have had (though to a decreasing extent) a strong common tradition of what was right and wrong, and partly because most of the previous structure of society has been dissolving away slowly, leaving something of the *status quo* that one could fall back upon in times of doubt. But, as Professor Lindsay is keenly aware, it has now become much more difficult to get on with a State that is not supposed to know what is right, since the age of technology and world communications has altered all the groupings within societies and the relations between them, greatly complicating the old political issues and raising a good many which are novel.

A great merit of the Master of Balliol as an expositor is that while he knows, and keeps his readers aware, of the vast complexity of social motives involved in every political question; the discourse never loses its grip, either upon the historical facts or upon the line of interpretation. He writes as a believer in democracy, but not an idolatrous one. Upon only one important point he is perhaps inclined to beg the question, and that is the point of sovereignty. He treats some of the theories of sovereignty to ridicule, cleverly enough, but he arrives with too much facility at the orthodox democratic conclusion that sovereignty resides in the Constitution. It can hardly be psychologically true that the ultimate seat of authority in any community is a legal code, vitally important as a code may be. The sovereign is a code embodied in a person or persons. Has Professor Lindsay asked himself why it is that the only European democracies which have survived the last two wars have been also monarchies, with the exception of the special case of Switzerland; or why the Presidents of the United States have the most monarchical status of

any democratic rulers? These are realities of contemporary politics which it is unwise for the author to underestimate; for he sees clearly the greatest weakness of democracies—their almost inevitable tendency to degenerate into masses ruled by dictators.

P. MAIRET

# PSYCHIC RESEARCH *

In half a century the S. P. R.'s "bag of nuts uncracked" has grown to mammoth proportions. Mr. Tyrrell is not alone in recognising the pressing need of a framework into which to fit the accumulated facts.

Psychical research is defined as the exploration of human personality, about the structure of which the psychical researchers are admittedly very much in the dark. Inquiry into it is indeed "likely to shed light on a good many problems besides the nature of personality itself." Séance-room phenomena are not included here but this book presents enough cases to convince the most sceptical that apparitions do appear.

In more than one case, however, the simple and obvious explanation is rejected in favour of a far-fetched one, *e. g.*, the well-authenticated apparition of Mrs. S. R. Wilmot to her husband in mid-ocean in 1863. There had been a great storm and she had been very anxious about him. Not only was her apparition seen by her husband, whom she leaned over and kissed as he lay in his berth, but also by his cabin-mate; she retained a distinct recollection of the visit. She described it accurately on his landing, mentioning a peculiar feature of the stateroom and her momentary hesitation at the door on seeing a strange man looking at her from the berth above her husband's. Mr. Tyrrell explains the apparition as "an elaborate sensory construct created by mid-level elements of the personalities of agent and percipient working together, and not as a conscious or semi-conscious being." Oriental psychological science recognises several possible explanations of this phenomenon, all straightforward and simple in contrast with this circumvolution.

This is not the only instance that gives the impression of leaning over backward in the attempt to maintain strict scientific objectivity. Common-sense, for example, rebels at the ruling out of pure clairvoyance, not only if the fact perceived *is* known to any mind but even if it ever has been or ever will be known. Common-sense also sees a difference *in kind* between (1) a "crisis apparition," (2) the "ghost" that gives her husband no peace till he fulfils her dying request and withdraws his opposition to their daughter's marriage and (3) a "ghost" drifting aimlessly about a house and becoming less substantial as time passes.

Certain theories put forward here come strikingly close to the ancient findings. Such is the positing that there could be any number of spaces co-existing without having anything, spatially, to do with one another, and that the conscious self is not necessarily present where the body is.

* *Apparitions: Being the Seventh Frederic W. H. Myers Memorial Lecture, 1942.* By G. N. M. TYRRELL. (Society for Psychical Research, London. 3*s*. 6*d*.)

Mr. Tyrrell writes that

> if the human being is the vastly complex structure that psychical science is beginning to reveal (and not merely complex, but, as regards its higher phases, impenetrable to thought and of unknown profundity), there may surely be a great deal of it which does not show....There may well be a... pre-existing self...of whose independent existence we can see no trace from without.

It is conceded to be "not clear that the pure self, as distinct from certain psychological elements of the personality, decays." Selfhood is recognised as "an intrinsic character, irresolvable and not derivative from anything else."

> We must, I think, look upon our personalities as at once partaking of selfhood and providing an internal environment for self.

The postulated "mid-level constituents of the personality" are the clue to much more than apparitions. Mr. Tyrrell recognises that many an apparition is purely subjective in origin. He has an important clue also in the recognition that sense-data can be originated not only from "below" by the normal operation of the physical sense-organs but also from "above,"

> by the operation of an *idea*, which, aided by certain mid-level activities in the personality, produces sense-data of exactly the same kind....The causal agent would be a psychological constituent of the personality whose specialised function it is to produce and control sense data.

But the deliberate production of an apparition is reported and commended as a promising line of investigation, as is the exploration of hypnosis. The dangers of both are real and the investigators would be well advised to acquaint themselves with theory before rushing into practice.

Psychical research is handicapped from without because its findings are incompatible with existing views, as Mr. Tyrrell recognises. But it is also handicapped from within by the investigators' preconceptions. Explanations lie ready to their hand, brought together in the writings of Madame Blavatsky, that, taken as working hypotheses, would not only save them from many a pitfall but would carry them far.

E. M. H.

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# TAGORE AND VILLAGE LIFE *

In the former of these admirable studies, Dr. Sudhir Sen provides as it were the spiritual setting of the physical problem of the Indian country-side which he analyses in the second. No economic situation is without its social implications and both are effects of causes not all of which are objective.

One of India's clearest modern thinkers, Rabindranath Tagore was deeply concerned with the plight of the Indian villager. An intricate system of social duties, the bulwark of rural society time out of mind, has broken down. As a result of modern conditions the village well-to-do, on whom their poor neighbours had been encouraged to depend, have departed to the cities and initiative and cheer have departed with them. The well-to-do were traditionally the providers not only of public utilities but also of entertainments on festive occasions, amply recompensed by appreciation.

* *Rabindranath Tagore on Rural Reconstruction* and *Land at Its Problems*. By SUDHIR SEN. (Visva-Bharati Economic Research Publications Nos. 2 and 3. Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, Bengal. Re. 1/8 and Rs. 5/- respectively)

It was a sorry day for the villages when wealth ceased to be looked upon as a social trust and became private property. They were left to their poverty and ignorance, lacking self-confidence, apathetic, fatalistic, envious.

The task as Tagore visualised it was not wholly ideational. He recognised the unsoundness of piecemeal tinkering and the necessity for all-round development of village life. But the mental drought seemed to him no less appealing than the physical. Dr. Sen interprets him as meaning "Rouse their minds and their muscles would be active." Cheer must be brought into the villagers' lives; the people must be induced to exert themselves. Tagore saw plainly that the problem could not be permanently solved without that. Weakness was a provocation to exploitation. The weak must acquire strength and for that they must be given education and a sense of unity.

The task of rural reconstruction he saw primarily as being to rebuild the village man. Service should be directed to getting him to stand on his own feet. Time and again he called his countrymen "to follow the path, uphill and arduous, of creative service," and to infuse self-respect, self-reliance and self-exertion. Not the least important of his contributions was his insistence on "giving with respect." He advocated "the cultivation of true relationship in realising in its full implication that all beings are parts of Great Humanity."

The practical idealist is the most effective of reformers. Tagore's experiments in village reconstruction at Silaidah, at Patisar and at Sriniketan have pointed the way to advance. The spread of education, the fostering of village industries, the settlement of disputes by arbitration, debt control, the encouragement of improved agriculture, of tree-planting, and of festivals—these are a few of the lines laid down.

The example has not, however, spread as it should. During these years, the Indian village has not won through to self-reliance and self-exertion. In *Land and Its Problems* Dr. Sudhir Sen brings out that intensive agriculture is not practised; the *Kshetra*, the field, and the body are alike neglected. The lands are depleted of their wealth by negligence and ignorance, just as the body is in a depleted condition under the weak stimulus of the impoverished mind. Dr. Sen suggests in his excellent scientific monograph practical remedial measures. These include flood prevention, improved implements and methods of cultivation, better manuring, including the adequate utilisation of organic waste, reafforestation, consolidation of holdings, and the overcoming of social taboos about work.

We should like to add to the conclusions of Dr. Sen that the peculiar sleeping-sickness from which India is suffering can be remedied not by the prevalent false doctrines, dogmas, objectionable customs and indiscriminate tradition, but by following practices which are spiritual as opposed to psychic, idealistic as opposed to idolatory, practical as opposed to speculative. India will wake to her New Dawn, a power in herself and a blessing to the world, if her sons and daughters assume a real sense of responsibility free from the canker of

privilege and class interest. Work for the country as a whole, vast in territory and huge in population, can be furthered not only by a return to ancient verities but also by imbibing those things in Western culture and science, and only those, which are beneficent, creative and spiritual.

M.

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# A STANDARD EXPOSITION *

Since its foundation some ten years ago, the Islamic Research Association of Bombay has rendered most useful service to the cause of Oriental scholarship by publishing a series of texts and translations of which Professor A. A. A. Fyzee's present volume makes the ninth. A number of these publications have been connected with Ismailism, on which much remarkable research has been made in recent times, in both India and Europe. The Ismailis are a minor branch of the great Shiite family; and it is curious, as Professor Fyzee remarks in his introduction, that whereas through the extremely valuable work of such scholars as Massignon, Ivanow and Kraus the Ismaili movement is now far better understood than it was so recently as fifteen years since, scarcely any progress has been made this century towards elucidating the origins and doctrines of Shiism itself. It is therefore all the more welcome that Professor Fyzee should now have given us a translation of one of the standard expositions of the Shiite creed, and it is permissible to hope that his present initiative may be followed by further studies not only from his pen but also at the hands of other scholars of Islamic culture.

Ibn Bābawayhi, the author of the *Risālatu'l-I'tiqādāt* now translated, was one of the earliest and most important of the Shiite theologians. Little is known of the details of his life, and the date of his death is uncertain: the years 381/991 and 391/1001 are variously given. He was a prolific writer, and Professor Fyzee lists no fewer than 171 books and treatises ascribed to him; of these however only 18 have so far been reported as surviving. His reputation among later Shiite writers was generally very high, and he is now regarded "universally as a pillar of religion."

*A Shi'ite Creed* is a straightforward exposition of the Shiite articles of belief. It is divided into forty-five chapters, and covers the whole field of theology. In addition to the customary sections on the nature of God, the Hereafter, the doctrine of Revelation, and Prophethood, on all of which there is general agreement throughout Islam, it also contains the purely Shiite theories of the Imamate and the Alids. As is customary in Muslim works of this kind, the monotony which would otherwise result from a bare catalogue of dogmatic beliefs is relieved by numerous quotations and sayings, many of them of great picturesqueness. Thus, in the section on Death the following passage occurs.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq was asked: Describe death to us. He said: To the believer it is like the most perfumed breeze, which he

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* *A Shi'ite Creed.* By ASAF A. A. FYZEE. (Islamic Research Association Series No. 9. Humphrey Milford, The Oxford University Press, Indian Branch. Rs. 5/-)

inhales and then dozes off on account of the perfume, and his weariness and pain disappear from him. To the unbeliever it is like the biting of vipers and the stinging of scorpions; nay, it is even more painful. He was then told: There are some people who say that it is more painful than being sawed (with a saw), or being cut by scissors, or being crushed (to death) by stones, or the circular motion by the pivots of hand-mills in the pupils of the eye. He, on whom be peace, said: Such is the travail of death on some of the unbelievers and sinners. Do you not see that among them are those who have witnessed such calamities? Now that death is more painful than this and is more painful than all the worldly torments.

Ibn Bābawayhi wrote in Arabic. Professor Fyzee's translation is faithful and scholarly, but none the less very readable. He has furnished his text with numerous illuminating foot-notes, and has provided full indexes. His book may be thoroughly recommended to all who wish to study the Shiite creed as set forth by one of its most authoritative exponents.

A. J. ARBERRY

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*Dvaita-Adhva-Kantakoddhara* (In Sanskrit, with a Preface in English.) By Dr. R. NAGA RAJA SARMA. (Vidya Mudraksara Shala, Kumbakonam. Rs. 2/-)

The first part of the work under review is a refutation of *Madhva-tantra-mukha-mardana* and *Madhva-mata-vidhvamsana* by Appayya Dikshita and the second part, a refutation of the gloss on the same by one Pundit Narayana Sastry. Dr. Naga Raja Sarma has composed 66 stanzas parallel with the 66 of Appayya Dikshita's work, with an explanatory prose commentary on each. The two works of Dikshita have been criticised by a number of previous Dvaita Vedantins and the present work is a welcome addition to the list. Dr. Sarma himself mentions a criticism by Vijayindra Thirtha, a contemporary of Appayya Dikshita. *Advaita-kalanala*, by Narayana Panditacharya, also in verse with a commentary by the author himself, is a work of great merit. In *Madhva-mukha-alankara* Vanamalamisra, a vedantic writer of Northern India, has also shown the hollowness of the objections raised by Dikshita against Madhva's *Sutra Bhasya*.

In the history of Indian dialectics, Appayya Dikshita, the famous advaitic writer of the sixteenth century, stands out as the most uncompromising opponent of Dvaita Vedanta. Himself a Saivite and a staunch advaitin, wedded to a system which dismissed the world as an illusory appearance and affirmed the absolute non-difference of the individual soul and the Supreme Being, he had no patience with a philosophy which identified the Brahman of the Vedanta with Vishnu and postulated the ultimate reality of not only the world but also of the difference between the transmigrating soul and the Lord of the Universe, a difference which persisted even in the state of release. The very title of his work and that of the commentary on it *Madhva-tantra-mukha-mardana* and *Madhva-mata-vidhvamsana* show how great was his animosity against the Acharya of Dvaita Vedanta. The main thesis of Dikshita is to show that Madhva in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras has violated all accepted rules of interpreta-

tion and that both the objection (poorva-paksha) and the answer (siddhanta), especially in the commentary on the first five Adhikaranas (topics) are logically incoherent and self-contradictory.

In his attack, Dikshita betrays an astonishing ignorance of the system he is criticising. Not that he is unacquainted with the work he is out to examine critically, but rather that his prejudice against Dvaita and its author so gets the better of him that he has no patience to correlate what has been said in different parts of the work and to grasp the point of view of his adversary. To cite one instance, his attack on Madhva's interpretation of the 5th Adhikarana (topic). Here the Bhashyakara shows that Brahman (Iswara) is the subject-matter of the Vedas and that these Vedas describe Him in language of immediate reference to Him; that is, according to Madhva, the meaning of Vedic words and sentences refer to characteristics actually present in Brahman. According to the Advaitin, however, Brahman being attributeless, whatever description there may be of the Supreme Being in the Vedas can only refer directly to Saguna Brahman (Brahman limited by adjuncts) and only secondarily indicate the pure attributeless Brahman (Lakshana Vrithi). Now Dikshita contends that even the Dvaitin cannot hold the view that "Sastra" directly describes his Iswara (Brahman) full of auspicious qualities. The teaching of the Vedas according to Madhva, says this critic, is intended exclusively to enable the aspirant to release from bondage to form a mental image of Brahman for purposes of meditation. So what the Vedas say of Brahman can only be primarily a description of the mental image in the mind of the devotee and only secondarily indicate Brahman. Hence, argues our critic, Madhva in the end holds the same view as the advaitin. One part of the commentary on the Sutras (3rd Adhyaya) contradicts what is established in another (1st Adhyaya).

Now, frankly, this objection is puerile. It is no doubt true in a sense that the description of the Brahman in the Vedas is intended to enable the devotee to form a mental picture of the object of his meditation, but the description directly refers to that of which he is to form a mental image and not to the image. If one is describing a lion to another who has not seen this animal, in order to enable the latter to visualise it the description must refer primarily, not remotely (by Lakshana), to the lion itself and not to the mental image which the person who has not seen the lion has to form in his mind after listening to the description. Raghavendra Swami in his *Prakasa*, a commentary on Vyasaraja's *Chandrika*, has refuted Dikshita's criticism of the 5th Adhikarana in a highly illuminating manner. The interested reader will have to supplement what Dr. Sarma has said on this point by referring to *Prakasa*.

It has been rightly said by Dr. Sarma that Pundit Narayana Sastry has not understood the work of Vijayindra Thirtha and that his criticism is in every case beside the point. The author has done real service to the cause of healthy criticism by refuting the uninformed attacks of the Pundit on a work of so cogent and terse a writer as Vijayindra Thirtha.

Of the works that have been written answering Appayya Dikshita's attack on Madhva's system, Dr. Sarma's is the most concise. In many cases the commentary explaining the stanzas is clear and to the point. In some places, however, as in the case of the 5th Adhikarana, the reader is likely to miss the point of the answer without further elaboration. Dr. Sarma has used very strong language, but one would think not stronger than that used by the authors of the works he is attacking.

B. VENKATESACHAR

*The Ivory Tower*. By S. R. DONGERKERY. (East and West Book House, Baroda. Rs. 2/-)

In the last lyric of this pleasant collection the Registrar of the University of Bombay defends the beleaguered Ivory Tower. In more normal times, it would need no defence. And even in the present its function should be recognised as one of the vital services. The world is terribly in need of the far view which the dust and heat of the battle field obscure hopelessly for most. Escapism ? No ! Man must have his mountain-tops from which to bring strength down to the plains.

These poems are delicately conceived and phrased with a fine command of the English medium. The verse-form rarely departs from the conventional, but the modern surfeit of verse more wild than free has left the present reviewer humbly grateful for a sense of rhyme and rhythm as true as Shri Dongerkery's.

Of the three groups of poems on "Love," "Beauty" and "Truth," the last are the most striking, though there is real beauty in some of the lines under the other headings. Mrs. Dongerkery's "Too Late," included under "Beauty" has a whimsical charm as refreshing as her lightness of touch. Especially lovely are the concepts in "On Seeing an Image of Buddha," "To the Trimurti" and "Ring the Temple Bells," which deals with the successful conclusion of Gandhiji's fast.

E. M. H.

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*Psychology*. (In Telugu). By K. C. VARADACHARI, M. A., PH. D. (Sri Venkateswara Oriental Institute, Tirupati. Rs. 2/-)

This book comprises some lectures on the subject delivered by Dr. Varadachari to the Pandits and students of the Oriental Institute, Tirupati, who are unacquainted with English. Naturally the topics are presented in a way that can be understood by them and information from Indian Philosophy is also included. Up till now there have not been many attempts to write on psychology in Telugu. One or two books on Child Psychology have appeared, as it is one of the subjects for the Normal Training School students. Mr. M. Gopalakrishnamurti's *Manastattvasaramu* is a laudable attempt, which brings together a lot of purely Indian material. But there has been practically no systematic presentation of the subject as developed in the West, and that is a chief requisite of the present. One may take up a work like Woodworth's and make a free translation.

The greatest difficulty one encounters in undertaking the task is the discovery of technical terms. Unlike the other South Indian languages, Telugu is more than three-fourths Sanskritic. It can rightly use all the Sanskrit technical terms as its own. But unfortunately the available Sanskrit technical terms have not yet been collected; and the attempts at such collection till now are not by those who are specially qualified.

Dr. Varadachari's attempt is commendable, especially as it is one of the earliest. I hope the book will be freely used by the Telugu-reading public.

P. T. RAJU

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*Habit and Heritage.* By FREDERIC WOOD JONES. ( Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London. 5*s*.)

From its interesting title this small volume is at first sight liable to be mistaken for a popular book on eugenics, but it does not take very long before the reader realises that it is a difficult book dealing with the evolution and destiny of MAN. In it Professor Wood Jones attempts to prove that, contrary to accepted teachings, *acquired characters are inherited.*

Professor Wood Jones is an eminent anatomist and biologist but he is pre-eminently an original thinker. He has applied his specialized knowledge to explain, though it may seem paradoxical, the present sad state of human affairs. Two common terms which are widely used nowadays, politically and internationally, are first discussed. What is the true meaning of Darwin's phrase, " the struggle for existence" and of Herbert Spencer's " survival of the fittest " ? This question is further complicated by the view which is widely held that the nature ( germinal or genetic constitution ) of the stock is all-important and that nurture ( or environment ) plays little or no part in the ultimate improvement or degradation of a race. The essential factor in Weismann's theory is the continuity of the germ-plasm. In simple language it may be stated that the fertilized cell which gives rise to the individual splits into two parts. The one part ( somatic part ) forms the body of the individual and the other gives rise to the sex cells contained in the gonad or the sex gland within the body of the individual. After discussing these various views Professor Wood Jones, to support his thesis, has utilised facts from human anatomy, biology, comparative anatomy and embryology. The development of the internal reproductive system of the marsupials has been described and cited in support of his views. But it is conceded that man differs from all other animals in that he has an external heritage in addition to an internal heritage. This external heritage is contained in the traditional lore and learning that are handed down in human society. One part of man's internal heritage which he shares with every other living creature, is his own individual genetic or germinal constitution.

This is a small volume of a hundred pages but it would not be easy reading for one who had no knowledge of comparative anatomy or embryology. Nevertheless it is a stimulating book and would afford considerable pleasure and intellectual exercise to the reader. The printing and get-up are excellent, considering war-time limitations.

P. N. and I. R. RAY

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*To One Who Sang: A Book of Songs.* By HERMON OULD. (The Porch, Tring, Herts. 3*s*.) Poplar-leaf sensitivity and delicacy of feeling characterise these twenty-five poems. They almost sing themselves; setting them to music must have been pure joy to a kindred spirit. Here are many moods, gay heights, sombre depths of genuine feeling; but the man is never swept away by the mood. Therein lies not a little of this poet's charm. The reader has a sense of steady roots no less than of branches stretching out and out towards something not quite realised but dimly felt. H.

*Six Lives and a Book.* By CLAUDE HOUGHTON. (William Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., London. 8*s.* 6*d.*)

This novel is about six human beings and a book. Mr. Claude Houghton says in the opening lines: "At any minute, an influence may enter your life with transforming effect. It may be a man, a woman, or—a book." The book (within the book) is a novel called *The House Not Made with Hands*, published in 1936. The story is narrated in the first person by a man called Mavers. He has his room on the top floor of a drab lodging-house in a crowded city. There are a number of other lodgers starting with Mitzi, the vivacious public woman living in the basement, and going up to Rosamund on the top floor, the florist's assistant with Junoesque figure and the manner of a princess: in between these two fill in the puritan Minniver, the trumpeting evangelist Fingleton, scholarly Maddock, and that happy man of success Beevers; each bringing his or her own outlook, aspirations and memories, and attracting or repelling Mavers and each other.

All one's relationships, even the most trivial and the most transitory, are revealing because they represent aspects of oneself. If we had courage, it would be necessary only to study the pattern created by those relationships in order to discover what we are.

And suddenly comes upon Mavers a new vision: he begins to see human beings not only as they are but also as they would be if all their potentialities were fully developed. Everyone appears to him in his or her *Viswarupa*. This helps him solve many problems in human relationships.

I had seen their transfigured selves and I invoked these in my dealings with their apparent selves. And, which was odd, everyone of them responded.

This book (*The House Not Made with Hands*) is found on the shelf of the Public Library at Marleham, a little West Country town; and it reaches the hands of six different characters. Mr. Houghton now works out an application of Mavers's theory by tracing the complex patterns of their personalities and their interactions. Lovely Olga Tresham with her secret sorrow (the death of her friend Ronnie in the R. A. F.); Robin Dart, idealist and social worker with his own sorrow (the death of his wife during an East End air raid); Denver Crane, an old skipper with a wooden leg who knew three types of intoxication, Rum, Danger and God, and who had his own sorrow (a telegram from the Admiralty announcing his son's death, which he took to his wife. ".... he remembered watching her face die... a few weeks later she died...") ; Cranton, with three thousand a year, a City gentleman; Kent, the uncompromising Communist; Mrs. Purvis, a sensitive creature living away from a crude husband, and haunted by thoughts of her son Tony serving in Africa. And then there is the enigmatic man, a sinister soul, following her about with preposterous proposals, who murdered his unpleasing wife during an air raid.

These persons gather, for different reasons, independently, at Marleham. They meet, talk, repel and attract each other, read The Book in the library, and leave Marleham. This is all the framework; but within it Mr. Houghton has managed to compress several planes of thought, word, and deed. This book may not satisfy

any one looking for the integration which goes to make the Novel form. But it would be wrong to read it as a novel. It must be read for its excellent writing, its wisdom, its symbolism, and its mystic, mesmeric quality.

R. K. NARAYAN

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*Inside the Left: Thirty Years of Platform, Press, Prison and Parliament.* By FENNER BROCKWAY. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London. 15*s*.)

This autobiography by one who was born in this country, and who has evinced a lifelong interest in its affairs has many claims on our attention. It is a valuable human document, a source-book of the inner workings of the British Labour Party from its inception to its latter-day evolution as the fifth wheel of the imperial chariot, and one of the most straightforward histories of our times. Withal, it is finely un-self-conscious, although written in the first person singular.

The politician who spends a lifetime in opposition is an exceptional figure in British history. Sooner or later, he makes his peace with himself or with his opponents, and dies in the odour of sanctity. The uncompromising fanatic who is out to save humanity, and is prepared to make a holocaust of everything but his convictions is as unlovely as the professional politician who usually makes the best of both the worlds, and takes his permanent stand on the peak of some tangible achievement. Mr. Brockway happily does not belong to either type. Starting with a passion for the under-dog which still remains, he has carried on a fight on many fronts while remaining essentially a stranger within the gates. He joined the Labour Party when it had as yet no past, has been a Marxist, a pacifist and a conscientious objector and an anti-imperialist before that came to have any association with communistic fervour. And then at the outbreak of the present war, he seems to have discovered that almost all his idols were no more than a mass of debris that came tumbling about his ears!

In a book which covers such a wide field both politically and emotionally, three aspects of more or less melancholy significance stand out. These are the ineffectiveness of the Labour Party to make itself felt on critical occasions, the exposure of the myth of the solidarity of the working-class movement throughout the world, and the inability of even the most unburdened Western mind to consider the philosophy of pacifism on its merits.

The present war has forced many a moving recantation of the pacifist creed by those who had been its most eloquent apologists. Mr. Brockway's reason is at least different. "It is not," he says, "the amount of violence used which determines good or bad results, but the ideas, the sense of human values, and above all, the social forces behind its use." This sounds profound, but really leaves the author and the reader in mid-air. He would be a bold man who would assert that there have been any cases of the use of violence inspired exclusively by a philanthropic impulse. It is an old device to blame everything on the other fellow, and to arrogate to ourselves the white robes of innocence. In practice, we know, violence tends to overstep its limits, if there are any,

and to justify itself with *ex post facto* arguments. The author's account of how savagely the conscientious objector was persecuted in the last war convicts his own government of using violence contrary to the spirit of his pronouncement. We should like to know what sort of "human values" was sought to be conserved by the treatment of that small band of martyrs who had the courage to refuse to fight.

On a strictly historical view, this war is no different from others which have gone before it. It has been different from others in having roused the British instinct of self-preservation in a more acute form than at any time in the past. In the face of that imperious and primary urge, all fair-weather philosophies have gone to the scrap-heap. We have to discredit ourselves many more times perhaps, before we can hope to discredit pacifism as a creed. At the moment, it is in an eclipse which is complete but only *seems* permanent.

P. MAHADEVAN

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*The Circle of Life: A Search for an Attitude to Pain, Disease, Old Age and Death.* By KENNETH WALKER. (Jonathan Cape, Ltd., London. *7s. 6d.*)

Some books are too vital for solitary assimilation and demand kindred souls to share the stimulus of ideas, the delight in the "rightness" of expression.

Such a book is *The Circle of Life* in which the humane wisdom of philosophy lights up and unifies the physician's knowledge. It starts from the point we all know, pain, fear, disease, and then—though it does not claim to formulate a general metaphysics of life—develops the problem away from its personal aspect to the question of pain in relation to life as a whole. Only so can one understand its nature in the pattern of evolution, and finally reach towards the mystery of life's purpose.

The author draws with sympathetic familiarity upon present-day works, such as those of Bergson, McNeile Dixon and others, as well as upon ancient sources, Chinese, Greek, Persian. But the book is not only "philosophizing"; it has a confident grasp upon the facts of modern scientific knowledge. Dr. Walker considers the present position of doctors and doctoring, surgery, psychotherapy, as well as the various theories, of Ouspensky, Freud, Jung, Heard and others, that have attempted an explanation of the nature of pain, of old age, of self, of time, of growth. The masterly way in which the essence of each theory is brought out in a few brief paragraphs is reminiscent of Chinese art, which suggests the soul of its subject with a few brush strokes.

What then is the summing up of the book? It is that the physical world and the spiritual world are not in reality an opposing duality. The constant travail of change in the physical life can only be understood in the light of the struggle for spiritual development. As Keats put it—and the passage is quoted twice:—

> Do you not see how necessary a World of Pain and trouble is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?

E. W.

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*Dodu and Other Stories.* By R. K. NARAYAN. (Indian Thought Publications, Mysore. Re. 1/8)

Those who would go miles in search of plots for their stories would probably be miles away from the note of authenticity which Shri Narayan's stories strike. He shows by practice that better stuff, homespun and vital, is to be found nearer home, like Mæterlinck's blue-bird. Only the writer must have in him the subtle art to weld that stuff of common experience into things of beautiful appeal as Shri Narayan does in this collection of seventeen short stories. His is an eye which sees a tale in an urchin's innocent adventure to provide himself with money for fire crackers by selling to a museum authority who kindly enters into the game a palm-leaf manuscript of his own making! He can weave a pathetic story out of the spiritual suffocation which a bank clerk suffers all his life. Shri Narayan is a keen and critical observer of life. The variety of characters we come across is proof of this. We meet people in all walks of life—melancholy beggars, gay bridegrooms, delightful children, fathers worrying over daughters' marriages and mothers misunderstanding their sons, suffering cabmen and ridiculous simpletons, a host that reflects the varied pageantry of life. And they are all true to life. Never do we suspect their identity or mistake their accent.

It is this that makes the stories so enjoyable despite the absence of much movement. Things move in these stories as fast or as slowly as the steady stream of life itself. No emotional high-lights, no false emphasis, no comment, no coloured glasses, and above all no projection of the author's self through any of the imagined creatures. Even where legend supplies the basis for a story—as notably in three stories here—imagination is rigorously controlled by an instinctive sense of veracity which is the hall-mark of Shri Narayan's stories. His observant eye has moreover the aid of a facile pen that masters a ticklish fancy so that we leave the book with an impression of having both seen through life and heard its deeper accents.

V. M. INAMDAR

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*Mauryan Polity.* By V. R. R. DIKSHITAR. (Minerva Series on Government, Pamphlet No. 3, Minerva Publishing House, Lahore. As. 6)

This booklet of forty-odd pages disproves two facile assumptions: (1) That the democratic mode of government is a peculiarly Western concept and (2) that the political history of India is one long story of internal strife. It is concerned principally with the form of government under the Emperors Chandragupta and Aśoka Maurya. The brochure ably epitomises the distinguishing features of the system, on the authority of Kautilya's *Arthasastra* with the corroborative testimony of Aśoka's edicts. A system in which, as Havell observes, "the common law of the land, formulated by the chosen representatives of the people, had a religious as well as a moral sanction and represented the highest power of the state to which even the King and the ministers must bow" should evoke from impartial critics the admission that the Western Mother of Parliaments had an Aryan predecessor in India long before the Christian era. A polity which recognised the organic unity of

the state and of the social structure and ever strove for the temporal and spiritual welfare of its subjects was truly democratic without being so labelled. As Shri Dikshitar remarks, the Mauryan state was an excellent type of culture state whose dynamic principles alone could fuse its extensive empire into a vital unity. Our constitutionalists can learn much from this brochure, which is but one of the many planned on the study of governments.

V. M. INAMDAR

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*Samurtarchanadhikarana (Atri-Samhita).* By MAHARSHI ATRI, edited by P. RAGHUNATHACHAKRAVARTI BHATTACHARYA and M. RAMAKRISHNA KAVI. (Sri Venkatesvara Oriental Series No. 6, Tirupati. Rs. 8/-)

This is a standard work on the Vaikhanasa Agama, that one of the two Visishtadwaita systems which the Tirupati Temple follows. The difference between it and the Pancharatra system is not on philosophical points but on points connected with temple worship.

The Upanishads, the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the Vedanta Sutras received three distinct interpretations from three South Indian teachers, Sankara (non-dualist), Ramanuja (the exponent of Visishtadwaita) and Madhva (dualist). In ancient India there was no antagonism among these different schools. Men's tendencies differ; accordingly their approach to the final goal too must differ. Each teacher explained his own point of view and individuals were to adopt whatever path was most acceptable. The King might have a particular religion but the State had none. Religious feuds are something new in India. Teachers who accepted a particular religion did so after studying all others. There may have been religious fervour consequent on conviction but there was no fanaticism. The people followed their teachers, and the teachers' tolerance was a strong brake on possible fanaticism of the masses.

Such a background is necessary to understand the present book. It deals with all the points in the Vaikhanasa Agama: the construction of temples, image-making, installation of the image, daily worship and so on. The text consists of eighty-three chapters. But there is no uniformity. In the appendix major differences in the text are first given and then ordinary variations of a minor nature are noted. There is also an index of technical terms. An Introduction in English by Mr. Ramakrishna Kavi and another in Sanskrit by Mr. Bhattacharya give an account of the Agama, its antiquity and its authenticity.

The title means "A treatise on the worship of the embodied." The Vedic Yajna (sacrifice) is a worship of the Formless Divine, through offering oblations in the fire. The fire is the only visible symbol and there is no embodied symbol of the Divine. The contemplation too is of the "Formless." But the Agamas deal with the worship of "the Divine with a Form," namely, the image. The Divine and His various Incarnations are represented by images through which He is worshipped. Through certain ceremonials, the images are endowed with special powers of knowing, of bestowing Grace on the pious, of showing the Path to those who seek it, of conferring special favours in the form of even worldly enjoyments on those who pray for them with true

devotion, of alleviating the suffering of the poor, and protecting the virtuous against evil-doers. The Deity in the temples is not a mere symbol; He is the Divine.

An age of narrow rationalism cannot understand this aspect of Hindu religion. How a stone or a mass of metal can have life and understanding is something that cannot be compressed into the narrow folds of rationalism. How a human body (which after all is only matter) can have life and understanding is still a mystery to science. An image's acquiring Divine powers is not a greater mystery. Modern man has misunderstood the religion of temple worship. The present publication is the starting-point in a true understanding of the secrets of Hinduism. Present-day scholars have tried to understand only such portions of ancient Hindu religion as can be reconciled to modern rationalism. Thus the Veda is relegated to a very insignificant position. Temple worship and religious practices are discounted as mere superstitions. Thus the books on Agama Sastra have been completely ignored by modern scholars.

The literature represented by the present publication will illuminate a vast field, now immersed in utter darkness. The opening up of that field may revolutionise man's life. Westerners are making new "discoveries" of what were for our ancients only initial stages in their endeavour to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Let not the Truths contained in such works be "discovered" by the Westerners and let not the part of patriotic Indians in future be confined to claiming that their ancients had anticipated such Truths. I welcome this work and I recommend it as an eye-opener.

C. KUNHAN RAJA

# CORRESPONDENCE

## "INDIAN ARCHITECTURE"

With reference to the review of my book *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period* which appears in the October number of THE ARYAN PATH, in addition to some inconsistencies, there is one misstatement of such a nature that I feel attention should be called to it.

Your reviewer says that "the interesting North Palace and water pavilions of the Munja Talao in Mandu are not mentioned."

I may point out that on pages 64 and 65 of my book, and in its logical position, there is a full description of these monuments.

PERCY BROWN

*Calcutta.*
*8th October 1943*

# ENDS AND SAYINGS

*"_____ends of verse*
*And sayings of philosophers."*
HUDIBRAS

Three years and a half ago Mr. H. G. Wells's draft Declaration of the Rights of Man provoked wide-spread discussion. It was not perfect but it offered a spring-board to world-reconstructive thought. We are glad that its ideas are still fermenting. A Committee has been working on them. We have received from its "secretarial co-ordinator" a statement explanatory of the rephrased demands now summed up under "the Universal Rights of Man." A commendable attempt has been made to make this formulation even broader-based. It was realised that the former political article followed too closely "the western parliamentary systems, which have never been effective east of the Rhine." And

> as we discussed this idea with men of remotely alien outlook and traditions, we realised more and more how western and provincial and conventional many of our assumptions and phrases were and how necessary was a much more searching consideration of social relationships.

The right to live, the protection of minors, freedom to work, the right to earn money but not the right to hoard it, the right to possess and enjoy, freedom of movement, the right to knowledge, freedom of thought, discussion and worship, personal liberty, freedom from violence and the right of law-making. These fundamental human rights are claimed not as grace from rulers but as a condition of true justice. How fundamentally Indian the concept is that "the Lord, the King or whatever form the higher power assumes, is itself under an obligation to do right"!

We have heard much about the Atlantic Charter. It is "so general in its terms," the present Committee charges, "that there is no skilled politician or diplomatist of the old school who could not drive a coach and horses through all its provisions." It and its Four Freedoms have been justly criticised, not least for their avowed inapplicability to India. If the Universal Rights of Man as outlined in this statement were taken as a detailed definition of the Four Freedoms their universal application could not be denied. Those who have the peace of the future world at heart must embrace in their schemes the whole world, the welfare of *all men*, irrespective of the distinctions of creed or colour, as does this charter of the Universal Rights of Man.

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Shrimati Sarojini Naidu's address read at the opening on 31st October of the Bombay exhibition of "Twenty-five Years of Soviet Power" paid tribute to the magnificent achievement of the Soviet régime. Lenin's dream had swept, like a fiery tempest, "smiting back into a long-forgotten consciousness of their own human status," vast multitudes "whom generations of oppression had beaten

down into a dreadful and fatalistic torpor akin to death." The Russian people had not only entered "upon its heritage of the garnered knowledge, art and beauty of the ages." Their sternly disciplined, united energy had also produced marvels in tangible results and in valiant defence of their own freedom and of civilisation.

Shrimati Sarojini Devi linked the Russian and Indian movements as "the supreme experiments of our time."

The message of Mahatma Gandhi and the evangel of the mighty Lenin, despite their complete divergence of thesis and technique, were in reality almost twins, born of the same implacable urge, the same irresistible necessity to deliver the spirit of man from its many forms of traditional, historic and contemporary bondage.

The reactions to both have certainly been similar—ardent espousal by some and vehement repudiation by others. Both challenged the old routines so comfortable for the privileged few but bearing so hard upon the many. A better society is the aim of both Lenin and Gandhiji. Both call out courage and virility. Both want man to rise to his full stature. They differ upon what that full potential stature is. Lenin sees man as a finite being; Gandhiji urges man to rise to his spiritual potentialities.

The meek and invincible apostle of Ahimsa has striven to redeem people by his austere and subtle alchemy, seeking to transmute, in the cleansing crucibles of self-sacrifice and self-suffering the dross of their weakness and inaction into some pure and golden ideal of character and conduct meet for the high burdens of freedom.

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In a lecture on "India in English Literature" delivered in Bombay on the 26th October under the auspices of the P. E. N., Mr. B. J. Wadia, Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University, traced how, from the Elizabethan times to the present day, India has attracted the attention of English writers. Distance has always lent enchantment, and, as Mr. Wadia brought out with the aid of many an interesting quotation, there has hardly been a writer who has mentioned India who was not glamoured with the fabulous Eastern splendour. The Orient became the poets' byword for gorgeousness, fantastic wealth, romance. For centuries the English Muse felt drawn to an India more of fantasy than of fact. Exploited and impoverished India then found a few defenders. But most who came to trade and remained to rule have had scant interest in India's real wealth. Mr. Wadia truly observed:—

One fact is apparent, that the English had for long only temporary interests in India. To them India was a reality, but never an inspiration. The British came as merchants and adventurers, they became soldiers through circumstances, then conquerors, and remained rulers and administrators. But their interests were really not permanent. No wonder they were and are still called birds of passage. No one whose interests are temporary can ever think of the permanence which literature brings. The second thing that is apparent is that it is extremely difficult for a foreigner to espouse the cause of another land in the same spirit as a child of the soil can. Even if he speaks of India's coral strand and the beauties of Kashmere, and the lofty mountains and inspiring rivers of the land, he speaks from a distance which divides but cannot bind. How can a foreigner know the feelings and sorrows of a strange land? The story of India in English literature is a disappointing tale, but such as it is, and such as I have found it, I have described to you.

It is a pathetic story that the glorious tradition of English literature should

on the whole have remained ignorant of the real glory that—unfortunately, alas—*was* India. Except for solitary figures like Fox, Shelley and Edwin Arnold, the aspiring soul of the people and the solid spiritual foundation on which the superstructure of Indian culture has been built have ever remained obscured by the exploiting instinct. The story of Indo-British relations would have been far different if the great and gifted British Muse had sung with knowledge of the deeper currents of a country at least as great and no less greatly, though differently, gifted.

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It is well that thoughtful men are recognising that the end of the war will not necessarily mark the beginning of peace. Whether peace will emerge from the crucible in a molten golden flow depends on what is thrown into the melting-pot now by the prospective victors. As Mr. Horace R. Cayton, a well-known Negro newspaper man, writes in *The Nation* for 3rd July 1943 :—

> Writing the peace is not a process that begins with the declaration of an armistice.... To insure a victory for the common man, who has too often been mobilized to fight for a noble objective only to find himself cheated when a military victory was won, the essential elements of brotherhood must be achieved during the struggle itself. Brotherhood is both the means and the end of the struggle.

A great change has come over the American Negro, he writes. His sympathy with the other dark races has made him in a sense more international-minded than the other nine-tenths of the population of the U. S. A. He is demanding not only Negro rights but democratic rights for all peoples. The problem of the American Negro Mr. Cayton sees as "part of the problem of all the common people of the world." The present war is one phase of a larger struggle to achieve "in America and in the world a moral order which will include the American Negro and all other oppressed peoples."

> The struggle in which we are engaged is one against oppression—whether from the tyrannical forces of Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito, or from the colonial imperialism of the British Empire, or from the racial imperialism of the United States. To win a cheap military victory over the Axis and then to continue the exploitation of subject peoples within the British Empire and the subordination of Negroes in the United States is to set the stage for the next world war—probably a war of colour.

*The Nation* backs Mr. Cayton up in a strong editorial, declaring that

> it is time for us to clear our minds and hearts of the contradictions that are rotting our moral position and undermining our purpose. ...We cannot liberate oppressed peoples while maintaining the right to oppress our own minorities.

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Writing on "Coalition for War and Peace" in the Summer 1943 *Yale Review*, Mr. W. H. Chamberlin maintains that the alliance of Britain, America and Russia, necessary to achieve the final overthrow of Nazism, can do much to ensure a safe and peaceful future for the world. We are especially interested in the significant comments offered on the imperialist domination of subject nations. He holds that "there must be satisfaction for the legitimate racial and national aspirations of the Eastern peoples who resent being held in Western tutelage." Great Britain, he suggests,

> might be willing to speed up the pace of extending self-government to India, to forgo some of the monopolistic and preferential features of imperialism if America would underwrite a guarantee against aggression

and make some concessions in the field of trade and tariffs.

Before such far-sighted co-operation can become possible, however, notions of East and West, the sense of racial superiority, the whole mental climate of imperialism, in short, must be given up. Mr. Chamberlin sounds a note of warning. Specifically he sees a potential menace to lasting peace in Asia in the great temptation which will face the U. S. A. and Britain after the war. The vastest armed forces ever sent to the East will be there after Japan is defeated, temptingly available to impose the will of Western imperialist ambition upon Asia. That temptation, he declares, must be resisted. It is well for the peace of the world that it is recognised in advance so that public opinion can be aroused to meet it.

Mr. Chamberlin recalls the misguided voting down at Versailles by the Anglo-Saxon powers of Japan's moderately worded resolution favouring the principle of racial equality. He mentions also that the U. S. Japanese Exclusion Act was taken even by moderates and liberals in Japan as a deliberate racial insult. He is convinced that "the widespread sense among Japanese of being despised in the West on racial grounds" was "a powerful emotional force in the hands of the militarists." He warns that a war of race and colour might prove to be the most terrible of all wars. That danger

must be exorcised by placing the relations between West and East on a new basis, free from the elements of colonial political and economic exploitation and from assumptions of race and colour superiority....It will be a fatal mistake if the peace settlement is conceived exclusively, or even primarily, in terms of the West, if the Asiatic peoples are relegated to a second-class status. The only type of world settlement that gives any promise of permanence will be one that knows neither East, nor West, neither border, nor breed, nor race.

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The November *Rural India* commends editorially the proposed establishment of the Rural Workers' Training College at Pohri (Gwalior) as a nucleus for the ultimate establishment of a Rural University. It regrets, however, the lack generally of adequate response from suitable constructive workers. This, it believes, accounts for the stagnation in the movement for rural uplift and development. Often enough has it been emphasised that India's future is closely bound up with the rehabilitation of our country-side. This means more than the development of rural resources and the growth of indigenous industries which can gradually stabilise rural economy and secure for the rural population a better standard of living. All this has never been denied in theory but when it comes to putting the theory into practice, there are relatively few who are prepared to put their shoulders to the wheel.

In justice to those behind prison bars it must be said that many who do have the genuine will to serve the country-side are not in a position to do so. But the primary difficulty with most who are drawn to rural reconstruction is claimed to be the absence of a proper spirit of service and sacrifice. The villages can offer love of comfort little and ambition less. They have no substitute for the sophisticated needs of the urban newcomer. All they have is a spirit of co-operation if that is properly evoked. But to evoke it the rural worker has to identify himself with their needs by putting service before self-interest. To para-

phrase Mr. George Lansbury's "There is no democracy unless there are democrats,"—there is no spirit of service worthy of the name unless there are self-sacrificing servers.

India has no monopoly on self-interest, which, alas, is the motive force of the many everywhere. But India has a tradition of self-forgetting service which hardly can be matched. The ideal of economic independence in old age is good. But India, in the words of a recent writer, sets against it a grander ideal, that of "an old age independent of economics."

If the rural training-schools and colleges can induce in their trainees a love of willing work, an adaptability to rural conditions of life, a faith in the work which has to be accepted as a mission, they will have helped to pave the way not only to speedier rural development, but also to the spiritual regeneration of our Motherland.

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In a letter published in *The Times of India* of 2nd November, Shri A. V. Thakkar and Mr. Verrier Elwin complain against the infiltration of missionaries in aboriginal areas. They point with facts and figures to alleged official support to their activities, in the Mandla District, a Partially Excluded Area under the Government of India Act. There, it is claimed, the Catholic Apostolic Mission in Jubbulpore has been allowed to open some sixty schools. The running of an aboriginal teachers' school is also reported to have been handed over to the management of the same Mission, the Government having agreed to bear half the cost of running the institution and made grants for other facilities. This, it is claimed, is contrary to the spirit of the Government of India Act, which sought to protect the aboriginals' economic, religious and cultural interests.

It is beside the point to question the propriety of segregating the aboriginals. The signatories to the letter are right in their demand that laws intended, however imperfectly, to safeguard a community's cultural integrity "should be implemented with scrupulous fairness." Let us face facts. Missionaries are here to spread their religion. No sophistry can successfully conceal the real nature of their aim, which is proselytisation. The handing over to them of the educational institutions is tantamount to surrendering the aboriginals' future to their tender mercies. More, it is a side-stepping by the Government of its own responsibilities. All that the aboriginals ask for is to be left to the simple unsophisticated tenor of their lives. The protest of the signatories must be heeded before it is too late.

The C. P. Government attempted to meet the charges in a press *communiqué* which conceded the large extent of missionary activity in the District while evading its implications. The Government's own educational record among the aboriginal tribes is poor; missionaries are proselytisers first and educators or whatnot second: those facts no arguments can do away with.

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Ilya Ehrenburg's article "The Fate of Europe" in the fifth number for 1943 of *International Literature* is an unforgettable word-painting of the abomination of desolation. The variety that was the living Europe's charm has faded. The drab monotony of devastation has erased the distinctive character of wasted, ravaged towns. Misery is the portion of the many from Greece to Poland, the Ukraine to France. For a thousand days (already how many more!) Europe has been trampled by marching armies, scarred by the lumbering passage of tanks, pitted with shells and torn by every implement of destruction evil fancy could devise.

But the physical devastation is the least terrible result. Scars have been

left on human consciousness that will be permanent: "*Souffrir passe; avoir souffert ne passe jamais.*" Barbarism has been let loose; the beast that in civilised man is chained has broken its fetters and run amuck. To the inevitable horrors of battle have been added the torture of prisoners of war, the massacre of helpless thousands, the deliberate breaking of families, the mass transplanting of workers far from their native lands, the creation in the cities of mobs of wild children among whom, in starving Greece, instances of cannibalism have been reported. Such is the havoc wrought by this unnatural, unnecessary cataclysm, produced by violence and the will to power.

> Terror deforms people. Some become cowardly, some pathologically cruel. Standards of behaviour disappear, the foundations of any social life are shaken. Europe is thus exposed to infection, ready for corruption of the tissues to set in, ready for anarchy. . . . No matter how this or that State thinker may conceive the future of European States, this future can only rest on culture, on standards of social life, on human dignity. Houses of widely differing architectural styles may be built out of stone. But there is no stone in a desert, there is only sand, and nothing can be built out of sand.

The ending of the war in a just peace before it is too late is the only hope of averting the anarchy of a Continent-wide *Terreur*, in which all human values must go the way of the pulverised landmarks.

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An important conference on the legal status of Indian women was held in Bombay in mid-November, under the auspices of the National Council of Women in India. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, the President-Elect, unable for reasons of health to preside, sent a powerful message. India, she said, notwithstanding her paradoxical position among free nations, had her special contribution to offer to the new synthesis of life. Indian women had their part to play in that but they could do so only on terms of equality with men. That equality Hindu law did not recognise. That fact could not, she declared,

> be explained away or extenuated by pious citations of a hundred chivalrous texts from ancient classics in honour of womanhood, or proud quotations of the names of a hundred women who by sheer force of their character, personality or genius, were able to transcend the unfair limitations imposed on their sex by legal codes and social conventions.

Shrimati Sarojini branded the existence of woman on sufferance and keeping her in insecurity, dependent on father, husband or son, as

> not only intrinsically a violation of all principles of equity and justice, but also an intolerable affront, perpetuated for many centuries, to all self-respecting womanhood.

It is to our sorrow that we have to confess the unjust disabilities under which our Indian women labour, and steps to remove those disabilities are overdue. But India need not stand shamed before the nations as the only or chief culprit in this matter. The legal position of women in Europe in the Christian Middle Ages was much worse than in the pagan Roman Empire or in ancient India. Until very recently there was little to choose between the status of a married woman under English and Hindu law. The economic disabilities of English working women are still the subject of heated Parliamentary debate. But two wrongs do not make a right.

By all means let the injustices be removed, but the true emancipation of our women cannot come through legislation alone. Woman is not inferior to man but her rôle is different. Woman is complementary to man and to recognise the right co-operative relation between the sexes is to take the first step towards the re-establishment of the ideal Indian home, with its gracious daughter, its companion-helpmate-wife, its wise counselling mother. What higher authority is there for Hindu law than the *Laws of Manu?* And they declare that

> where women are honoured, there verily the Devas rejoice; where they are not honoured, there indeed all rites are fruitless.

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